



Make 2011 the Year of Healthy Eating with one simple change . . .

One simple change can transform your health. It is something we all know, and yet few of us actually do. Eating more fruits and vegetables can change your life.

Sure, you've heard it before, but you may not realize how much of an impact these foods make. Fruits and vegetables are loaded with life-altering compounds. Besides being rich in vitamins and minerals, they contain other nutrients called phytonutrients. Tens of thousands of phytonutrients have been discovered, and we keep finding new ones. Even something like celery, which doesn't have a lot of vitamins and minerals, is rich in phytonutrients.

Everything we do as physical beings relies upon a complex series of chemical reactions. The nutrients in food provide the enzymes and catalysts that keep these chemical pathways running. How much of those nutrients we get in our diet makes the difference between health that gradually deteriorates or stays strong. We get more nutrients from produce than from any other source. Nutritional supplements may have benefits, but they can't replace fruits and vegetables.

Fruits and vegetables are also rich in fiber. The daily recommendation for fiber is around 25 – 35 grams. Using an average of 3 grams per ½ cup serving, 9 servings yield 27 grams of fiber. Add a few servings of whole grains and you can easily meet the fiber target. Lettuce is pretty low in fiber – a cup only has 1 gram. If you are relying on lettuce salads as your main source of vegetables, your fiber intake could be really low.

Cruciferous vegetables support the liver in detoxifying harmful chemicals and protect against cancer. They include broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale and Brussels sprouts. It doesn't mean you can't get cancer if you eat these veggies, but they do help lower your risk.

Fruits and vegetables have yet another health advantage. They balance the acidity level of the blood. Meat, dairy and grains make our blood too acidic. Eat less meat and more veggies, to improve the health of your kidneys and bones, improve blood pressure, and keep insulin working effectively.

If weight loss is one of your goals, let fruits and vegetables help. When you eat the recommended amounts of these, you tend to fill up more quickly. By focusing on the good foods, you naturally eat fewer of the less healthy foods.

If you are one of the 8% of people who already eat the recommended 9 servings (~4 ½ cups) a day of fruits and



vegetables, then congratulations and keep it up; you are giving yourself the best health insurance available! If you are part of the 92% of Americans who need more fruits and vegetables, here are ways you can make it part of your daily diet:

Divide the 4 ½ cup recommendation over the whole day. For example, if you aimed for 2 cups of fruit a day, you could have ½ cup at breakfast, ½ cup at lunch and 1 cup for snacks. A medium size apple is around a cup, as are bananas and oranges. You could divide up 2 ½ cups of vegetables by having 1 cup at lunch and 1 ½ cups at dinner. Plan to have fruits and/or vegetables at every meal and most snacks.

Learn how to cook vegetables so that you truly enjoy them. Add small amounts of oil or butter to enhance flavor and to make the fat soluble vitamins more available. Add onion, garlic, parsley, chiles, and other seasonings. Enjoy the color, texture and variety that vegetables add. Build your meals around the vegetables. Buy local and seasonal when you can. Use whole fruit instead of juice.

Cook up large portions of vegetables. When you think of your dinner plate, picture half of it covered with vegetables, a quarter with a protein food and a quarter with a whole grain starch or starchy vegetable (like potato, peas, corn, or winter squash). Frozen vegetables are generally just as healthy as fresh ones, especially when they come without added salt or sauces. Use dried beans and legumes often; they count as a vegetable and are particularly rich in fiber, starch and protein.

Have fun with fruits and vegetables. Well prepared, they can add excitement to your meals and will probably add years to your life. If you make only one resolution for 2011, let it be to eat more fruits and vegetables. Make 2011 the year you improve your diet with this simple change!

Recipes for the Month

[Easy and Healthy Creamed Spinach](#)

[Winter Salads](#)

[Lima Bean and Celery Stew](#)

Click the links to the recipe, or find it on my blog at www.HealthyHabitsCoach.wordpress.com.



How does your diet rate? *Could you use some support in adding fruits and vegetables to your diet? Are there other healthy habits that have been elusive? I can help make it easy and fun! Contact me at: kathy@healthyhabitscoach.com or 707 431-7524*

Kathy Nichols: Life Coach & Registered Dietitian

Are you ready to stop dieting and looking for a way of eating that is sustainable, enjoyable and healthy?

Discover Wellness from the Inside Out!

